



# hands on

Stories, ideas & news from Kids Friendly | ISSUE 19 | July 2011



## Living faith

Something I think about a lot is how do we help children live their faith?

For every children's lesson I prepare I always try to include a "weekly challenge" to encourage children to apply their learning in the world. My hope is to inspire children to **be** the hands and feet of Jesus.

Jesus was all about doing. He epitomised servant leadership and "servant leaders are willing to walk the talk and to live and **be** the values they espouse" (Time magazine). Jesus is our role model for living and leading.

We are just about to run our sixth "Transformers – Raising Up Young Leaders" camp in Ngaruawahia where 40 young people (10 to 13 years), accompanied by their mentors, will explore what it means to be a servant leader inspired by Jesus. The Transformers programme encourages and facilitates young people to "walk the talk" of their faith.

But of course the concept of serving can be grasped by children as young as 3 as the "Halfbacks", St John's Kids preschool class, showed when they served the congregation morning tea (pg 3).

Our churches need to be places where children not only learn of the faith, but are given opportunities to live the faith.

The family is equally, and possibly more important, in helping children understand what it means to be

a Christian and live out God's mission. 80 Auckland parents and grandparents recently enjoyed an inspiring evening on faith sharing and Angela Goodwin (St John's Mt Roskill), winner of the Faith Box at this event, shares how her family "makes faith integral to their being".

And of course the main thrust of our Christian mission is to love others. Kids Friendly and Global Mission have partnered to create "Connecting Kiwi and Vanuatu kids" to encourage understanding and friendship between children of different cultures.

It's wonderful to see so many of our churches committed to ministering to and with children, but the harsh reality is that 90% of New Zealand children still don't feel church, as we know it, is for them. Pat Lerwill, family worker at St Margaret's Silverstream said to me recently: "Since we have become a Kids Friendly church, we are constantly grappling with how we can be a better church for those children who don't come." Their response has been to launch Messy Church. Their first one attracted 120 children and their parents! What an exciting opportunity to share a living faith.

Thank you for your stories and may you be encouraged in your ministry as you read of other's experiences.

God bless. Jill

## Welcome Lucy



We are excited to welcome Lucy Davey to the Kids Friendly team. Lucy joined our Auckland office in February as a part-time Kids Friendly Coach and is already proving to be a wonderful asset to our team. Lucy is an accomplished children's author (check out her array of wonderful books at [www.lucydavey.com](http://www.lucydavey.com)) She is also a successful musician, songwriter and worship leader. Lucy grew up in Wellington where she attended St Giles Presbyterian Church in Kilbirnie. Lucy's first career was as a biotechnologist and bioprocess engineer. She has a doctorate in chemical engineering but her real passion is helping people of all ages to connect with God. Lucy says: "I want every child, every person, to know they have value; that God loves them and our church family does too. I want to facilitate connections between young and older people as they journey in faith together." Lucy has three children, Hannah 13, Samuel 10 and Holly Grace 6. She is married to Mark.

# Kids in Mission

## Connecting Vanuatu and Kiwi Kids

Kids Friendly and Global Mission are partnering in a venture to encourage children in mission and remind us that Jesus loves children everywhere.

Children from five ni-Vanuatu Presbyterian schools will be linked with children in five New Zealand church groups such as Sunday schools, Kids clubs, or Girls'/Boys Brigades.

The children will exchange scrap books about their town, life, school, church and community, write letters, make videos, and share their faith and views on life.

"This is not primarily about giving financial or other material support to the schools," says Pamela Tankersley, PCANZ's Global Mission Co-ordinator, "It is about establishing healthy relationships between peer groups of children. We want to enhance children's understanding of mission being about relationship and sharing, not just 'raising money to send missionaries over there!'"



Annie Christie, from Otaki Waikanae Presbyterian Parish, is the project co-ordinator, and responsible for visiting Vanuatu and establishing relationships with the ni-Vanuatu schools.

"I visited three schools and one Sunday School group on the island of Efate, Vanuatu. When I delivered the scrapbooks our Waikanae Girl's Brigade group had made, and talked about making connections with children in New Zealand, the teachers and students were really excited about the idea. One group wanted to get working on the scrapbook straight away!

I was so amazed by the happiness and friendliness of the people on Efate, despite their less than ideal circumstances. Everyone is so enthusiastic and keen to learn. It will widen horizons in many ways if we can get one-to-one connections happening between children in Vanuatu and New Zealand," said Annie.

"We hope to raise a new generation of leaders who have knowledge and experience of global mission, through developing friendships across cultures and countries," says Pamela.

## We want YOU!

Would your church or other group of primary aged children like to take part in the Connecting Vanuatu and Kiwi Kids project? We are looking for churches to participate.

We are ideally looking for children who are not already engaged in a global mission project.

We want children who:

- Would love to share some of their life experiences in the "Connecting Kids" Scrapbooks. (This could make an ideal project to work on during the holiday Sundays).
- Want to make new friends and learn more about children in other parts of the Pacific.



# Kids in Mission

## Tiny Tea-Time Servers

St John's-in-the-city, Wellington are intentional about helping children and adults in their congregation get to know each other better, so decided to roster each "St J's Kids" class on to provide and serve morning tea once a term. This special morning tea is hosted in the children's hall rather than in the usual church foyer.

"Involving children in the serving of morning tea also encourages parents to get involved and work alongside our leaders and their children. And it creates opportunity for the kids to contribute to the life of the church," says Children's Minister, Anna Davis. "And who could turn down a child inviting them to morning tea?"

This term it was time for the "Halfbacks" to serve. No problem, except these are pre-schoolers! "It did require a little forethought," says Heather Walker, Halfbacks' leader. "The week before, the children decorated morning tea invitations and parents were asked to bring specific items to contribute to the morning tea. During the week people who had been away on Sunday were phoned and brought up to speed on the plan – this was a great opportunity to catch up with their news."



On the day, families arrived a little early so that the children could greet people at the door and hand out their morning tea invitations.

When children left the service for St J's Kids, parents went too, and it was all stations go! A flurry of handwashing, cheese and tomato slicing, popcorn popping, biscuit decorating, and tea and coffee making ensued. And of course there was plenty of taste testing as well!

By the time the service was finished, the children were standing, nametags on, ready with plates of food to pass around, and their parents were behind the tea and coffee pots. Everyone enjoyed the café style atmosphere.

"It was a very successful day," says Heather. "The children loved being entrusted with important 'adult' roles and of course taste testing! The parents were happy to be involved and connecting with others they may not have known so well. And the morning tea provided an opportunity for the adult congregation to chat with the children."

**Fantastic!**

## Mission can be Messy



Can you imagine your church overflowing with busy and engaged children and families from your community? Well this was a reality for St Margaret's Silverstream at their inaugural Messy Church in June. "We were amazed and thrilled by the response from the

community," says Pat Lerwill, Family Worker. Families came from Play Group, Girls' Brigade, Sunday School and through other connections in the community.

"It was a blast! We had over 120 people, including our two leaders Rosenda and Delena and their fantastic band of helpers. Everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy the rather crowded, messy, but happy experience."

The focus for the event was the story of Noah. Craft and activity abounded.

A large cardboard ark was made and painted, pastel animals coloured and attached, a mosaic sea formed from blue paper and cellophane, sea creatures and sparkles cut to ride the waves, and a rainbow decorated with children's handprints.

When all was assembled the creations were taken to the church where they were used in a dramatic re-telling of Noah's tale, complete with wind, thunder and rain sound effects! After a song, prayer and grace, it was time to share a meal together.

"All wonderful fun," says Pat, "and reports have been very positive. We even had one Dad who doesn't normally connect with church won over by this approach. Very encouraging to us as we plan our next Messy Church."



# Nurturing your family's heart

Delectable morsels, candle-lighting, the aroma of coffee, conversations around a table of new friends... was the setting for Kids Friendly's recent "Nurturing Your Family's Heart" event. Eighty parents and grandparents were inspired by guest speaker Ian Grant to share their love of God with the children in their lives.

"I believe the home is where God intended faith to happen," said Ian "with dads, mums and grandparents, inspiring their children." Ian shared stories of using the Faith Box to share faith with his grandchildren.

"The Faith Box is a wonderful tool for families to have good old-fashioned fun together while exploring the word of God. Dressing up in raincoats and squirting each other with the garden hoses was a highlight for my grandsons!"

The Faith Box was developed by Mary Grant and Rev. Nikki Watkin ([www.faith4families.org](http://www.faith4families.org)), and launched this year in February. Mary and Nikki demonstrated a sample session. After nominating a "Mum" and "Dad", each table worked through a session of questions, scriptures and stories and carried out fun activities with fizzing effervescent tablets and hair dryers! It was great fun, and wonderful to get a sense of how the devotions could work in a family setting.

## Integrating faith in the family

Angela Goodwin, Children's Minister at St John's in Mt Roskill, is passionate about sharing her faith with her children, Samantha (3½) and Jessica (5).

The Goodwin family were the lucky winners of a Faith Box at the "Nurturing Your Family's Heart" evening, and have found it a wonderful extension to their family faith times.

"I am so pleased to have a resource to help with faith at home," says Angela. "Having grown up in a non-Christian home, sharing faith didn't come easily to me. At first our faith sharing was limited to saying grace, the occasional Bible reading and bedtime prayers. About two years ago my husband

and I attended a Kids Friendly "Sharing your faith@home" workshop and were challenged and inspired to be more intentional about sharing our faith with our children. We now really integrate faith into our children's lives."

As well as using the Faith Box, Angela has lots of other good ideas for passing on her faith to her children. "We listen to a lot more Christian kids music now," says Angela, "and the girls and I are incorporating memory verses into learning letters of the alphabet."

Each week Angela and her children create a big poster of pictures relating to one letter. They include memory verses into the learning too, for example, "Put on the full **A**rmour of God", and "**A** gentle answer turns away **A**nger" for "**A**".

"It is a holistic approach to learning," says Angela, "they are getting a great foundation in early literacy skills and in faith!"

Angela is excited at how the children are remembering the scriptures and incorporating them into other situations even though they are so young. "Because our posters with the memory verses are on the wall around the meal table, the girls are really taking them in, and even initiating reciting them."

Samantha and Jessica are now sharing their love of God with everyone and in many ways; from concerts for their Grandmas, to stories, pictures and prayers at Kindergarten. Faith is integral to their being.



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